

# 'Golden Pond' Offers Moving Story

**CENTRE HARBOR** — The quiet secluded point on Squam Lake where "On Golden Pond" is being filmed must have been the place Ernest Thompson had in mind when he wrote the stageplay. Equally as fitting is the cottage being used for most of the film's major scenes. It sits in a heavily shaded grove overlooking a quiet section of the lake.

"On Golden Pond" is the warm and tender story of Norman Thayer Jr. and his wife Ethel — portrayed by film greats Henry Fonda and Katharine

Hepburn — and how this certain summer is different than the 47 others they have spent at their summer home.

The Thayers arrive for the season in May and do little except to go for walks and watch and listen for the family of loons which has nested in the cove.

Norman, who is approaching senility, says he plans to look for a summer job. He goes as far as reading classified advertisements.

They are joined at their summer retreat in July by

their daughter Chelsea Thayer Wayne — Jane Fonda — who arrives to help celebrate Norman's 80th birthday.

With her are her companion Bill Ray, a Los Angeles dentist, (played by Dabney Coleman) and his 13-year-old son, Billy Ray, (portrayed by Doug McKeon), a short youth who acts in a flippant manner to coverup his awkwardness.

The story's only other major character is Charlie Martin, the postman who delivers mail around the lake by boat. Actor William Lanteau is

repeating the role he created when the stageplay was produced in Los Angeles.

Lanteau a veteran of the stage and screen, has played opposite Henry Fonda in "Mr. Roberts" and "Sex and the Single Girl."

Coleman, a veteran of the screen, can be seen as Jane Fonda's boss in her latest movie "9 to 5."

After a short stay Chelsea and Bill leave for a trip to Europe. Billy is left behind with her parents.

Billy, a city boy who is street-wise but knows little about country life and "good books." He and Norman hit it off immediately. They learn from each other and develop a poignant relationship. They fish daily from morn 'til night. Norman develops better habits and does a bit of "fixin' up around the home and even learns to appreciate some of the classic authors.

When Chelsea returns a month later she is alone. Bill, whom she married while in Brussels, has gone on ahead to Los Angeles to resume his practice.

Ethel tells Chelsea of the changes in her father's lifestyle by saying "Billy is the happiest thing which has happened to Norman since Roosevelt." The happiness is short-lived as Chelsea and her stepson have to leave for the West Coast.

Towards the end of the summer when the Thayers must leave Golden Pond and return to their year-round home they telephone Chelsea. Ethel assures her that they will pay them a visit if she can convince Norman that he doesn't need a passport to go to California. Norman finally takes the phone but he is more interested in talking to Billy than anyone else.

After the car is packed for the homeward journey Ethel and Norman walk to the lake. As they do a pair of loons without their baby greet them. Mention is made that their "baby too has left."

Ethel kisses Norman, they glance at each other and she says: "Hello Golden Pond, we've come to say goodbye."

"On Golden Pond" has moments of lightheartedness and also has several dramatic scenes. It is a story which the whole family should enjoy.

The screenplay for "On Golden Pond" has been carefully adapted from the stageplay by its author, Ernest Thompson. A film company spokesman said the main difference is that some of the scenes have been expanded to include the play's off-stage action.

Directing the movie is Mark Rydell. It is a Mark Rydell IPC-ITC Production. The expected release date is the fall of 1981.

## Whatnot

Tuesday's Boston Herald American reports on the film being made at Squam Lake. Headlined "The Stars Will Shine Every Morning," it appears under The Ear column:

Golden Olden: And speaking of "On Golden Pond," the new movie starring Jane and Henry Fonda and Katharine Hepburn, producer Mark Rydell is a little nervous. Two of the major stars — Henry Fonda and Hepburn — both have checkered medical histories. Fonda has a pacemaker. Hepburn has an appreciable tremble (Parkinson's disease). He's 75. She's 71.

To get the cream performance from the stars, Rydell plans to shoot his main scenes when they're fresh, during the early part of the day. The same technique was used with Spencer Tracy on his last film "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner," also with Hepburn.

And the set will be closed. To such an extent that Ernest Thompson, young writer of "On Golden Pond," had to ask Hepburn if he could come by and watch her act.

"Only," she said with that mahvelous twang, "if I can come by and watch you write."

Eye say. Write on.